

## Eliminating Worry

***The problem of life is to change worry into thinking and anxiety into creative action.***

You can think about your problems or you can worry about them, and there is a vast difference between the two. *Worry is thinking that has turned toxic.* Thinking works its way through problems to conclusions and decisions; worry leaves you in a state of tensely suspended animation. When you worry, you go over the same ground endlessly and come out the same place you started. Thinking makes progress from one place to another; while worry remains static.

### **Did you know every system in your body is affected by worry?**

Worry can raise blood pressure and prompt your liver to produce more cholesterol, it can cause muscle tension and an increase in headaches, back pain, and other body aches. Worry can also trigger an increase in stomach acid that can lead to stomachaches, constipation, diarrhea, gas or heartburn. Worry can impact your respiratory system and aggravate your asthma. Growing evidence even suggests chronic worry can compromise your immune system.

*Ridding yourself of worry is absolutely the healthy thing to do.*

The first and most important step to getting rid of worry is determining it is a problem and that you are **choosing** to eliminate it as a problem. If you have done this, you are already well on your way to learning to live without worry!

### **Here are some potential ideas for eliminating worry to add to any that may already be working for you:**

1. Stop the worry before it has the opportunity to take control of your emotions and thoughts. Work quickly when you first become aware of any negative thoughts that fuel worry. Do something else, if only for a few minutes: splash cold water on your face, stand up and stretch, call a friend, imagine a big flashing stop sign in your mind's eye, listen to upbeat music or a relaxation CD, exercise or go on a mini vacation in your mind. Whatever you choose, channel your thoughts in another more positive direction.

2. Think of something over which you have control or at least think of something more pleasant.
3. Do something you enjoy, perhaps with a friend.
4. Talk to someone. Talking to someone about your fears or concerns can shine the light of reason on the negative products of your imagination.
5. Take action! When nature gave us the imagination to help us identify potential threats, she also gave us fear to spur us to take protective action. Make a plan and follow it through.
6. Learn to let go. Sometimes knowing the difference between a situation over which you have control and one over which you have no control can help. If there is nothing you can do, acceptance may be the answer.
7. Practice, practice, practice: it can soon become second nature to relax, exercise, or change thoughts, rather than doing the old counter-productive worrying.